

The Appropriations Committee
Thursday, February 23, 2017
Public Hearing
Legislative Office Building - HTD, CT

Good Afternoon,

I'm Velma Williams-Estes, Steering Committee Member of the advocacy group 'Our Families Can't Wait' and a member of other committees dealing with the issues of the **I/DD** (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) Community. I'm a widow and the Mother of 49 year old Deborah who has Down syndrome. She cannot read, write, take care of personal needs independently or understand how to cope with everyday living situations. Her vocabulary is very limited. She and I live alone and I am her only caregiver.

I struggle constantly about what will happen to my daughter when I'm no longer able to take care of her due to illness or death. It seems the state of Connecticut does not have the concern to take responsibility and fully finance the very department, **Department of Developmental Services** (DDS) whose initial design was to support and provide needed services to this very population!! I do not need to quote the governor's budget cuts to you because you are fully aware of them. I do not need to educate you on the needs of our loved ones because you have heard them countless times, nor can you live in this world and not see the needs of others. You may choose not to acknowledge these facts but at least be honest about your own position on this matter and have the courage to stand up for what is morally right for all. As our elected officials, you owe us that. There are no excuses for the lack of truthful responses to the people of this state. Today, my questions for you are:

- 1. Will you join families and come together (both sides) to stop *slashing* the lives of people who are the most vulnerable?**
- 2. Will you commit to make the lives of people with I/DD a **PRIORITY** in this state's budget?**
- 3. Or, will you once again *rubber-stamp* this truly unfair budget?**

I pray that you will think about the impact of your decision; how it will affect everyone now and in the long run.

Respectfully submitted,

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